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THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

Quarterly News-Letter

The Overbrook Press

An Example of Collecting in Depth

By NORMAN H. STROUSE

IT IS A NOT UNCOMMON experience among collectors to achieve strength in depth in some special field without original intention, but rather by chance interest or opportunity. Such is the case of my collection of The Overbrook Press, which now numbers 110 items, and comprise the exhibit that has been on display at the Gleeson Library of the University of San Francisco.

Although I have collected fine printing and the private or quasi-private presses for the past fifty years, my primary objective has always been to bring together an illuminating representation of the fine art of printing as practiced by those who grounded themselves thoroughly in the best traditions of the craft, influenced their contemporaries and successors through the insistent high quality of their product, and in many instances broke new ground through originality and innovation of concept.

Generally, I could be content with a limited number of items of an individual press, including when possible the landmark titles. The presses which best qualified for this objective were those which seem to have captured the special fancy of most discriminating collectors of fine printing—presses which have been, as Emerson defined an institution, “The lengthened shadow of one man.”

My library catalogue of May 7, 1973 shows that I possessed 36 Overbrook Press items at that time. This included most of the major productions such as *Manon Lescaut*, Stevenson’s *The Inland Voyage*, the *Poems* of Shakespeare, Robert Nathan’s *One More Spring*, Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey*, and Oscar Wilde’s *The Happy Prince*.

Today my collection of Overbrook comprises 110 catalogue items, and these are clearly representative of the total product of the press, with the exception of the books on chess.

I could stop here, of course, but each new item that comes to my attention seems interesting in its own right, and lends further confirmation to my views as to the possible objectives of the press. I use the plural deliberately as there seem to be several objectives so far as content of books and pamphlets is concerned, although tied together through a central interest in typography and design.

My special interest in this press was stimulated and sustained during the past several years through correspondence with my old friend Herman Cohen of the Chiswick Book Shop, who had early relations with the press when it was making a few of its books for sale through Chiswick and Philip Duschnes. Herman, particularly, has a talent for the acquisition of ephemeral material, into which category much of the Overbrook Press material at first sight might seem to fall, as there are many pamphlets, and even many of the hard cover books are slight in number of pages. But a careful study of these items would seem to challenge the use of the word ephemera if the dictionary definition of the word is accepted. But more of that later.

My first task was to organize my Overbrook material so that I could turn it over to Steve Corey for the exhibit. In doing so, I realized for the first time that I had a comprehensive over-view of the Press; and as I examined the material, item by item, I became tremendously impressed, both with the graphics and the content of the product of this Press.

I have long made it a practice to accumulate articles, pamphlets and other related materials about presses, and simply drop them into my files for possible future reference. When I went to my Overbrook file, I discovered that I had more information available than I had realized. Furthermore, at Herman Cohen's suggestion, I wrote letters to two individuals who had been associated with the Press in its earlier days, and received rather illuminating responses.

All of this resulted in a growing sense of excitement about the Overbrook Press, its origins and accomplishments.

Although the Overbrook Press brought together in its productions

a modest galaxy of distinguished names in the graphic arts, it was the "lengthened shadow" of one man, Frank Altschul. He was a San Franciscan by birth, born in this city April 21, 1887, graduated from Yale with a B.A. in 1908, picking up three honorary LL.D.'s much later in life—Bates College in 1952, Yale in 1967 and Columbia in 1971.

Pursuing a career in finance, Mr. Altschul was for many years senior partner in charge of the New York office of Lazard Freres, the French bankers, achieving distinction in his field and accumulating a comfortable fortune. Today, at 88 years of age, retired for more than 20 years, he lives quietly in his 450-acre estate in the environs of Stamford, Connecticut, the scene of the Overbrook Press activities for some 35 years.

The current issue of *Who's Who In America* carries a modest 18 line summary of Altschul's career, without a single reference to his interest in graphic arts or the Overbrook Press, although it included in the list of clubs to which he belonged the Grolier, Rowfant Club and The Club of Odd Volumes.

Featured in the current September 1975 issue of Yale Library Associates *Newsletter* is a report on the unveiling of a portrait of Frank Altschul by Dean Keller, Professor Emeritus of Drawing and Painting at Yale, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Chauncey Brewster Tinker's Alumni Day address on the University Library, which led to the founding of the Library Associates, an action initiated by Altschul. It speaks of him as "a great lover and collector of books," his chief areas of collecting having been the works of George Meredith, French illustrated books, early printed books, and fine bindings, and that "the Altschul name is familiar in many collections throughout the library." Here again, no reference to Overbrook. Mr. Altschul was Chairman of the Yale University Council for several years, and worked closely with Whitney Griswold in reorganizing the Social Sciences Department.

It may be a surprise to most of this audience, as it certainly was to me, that the genesis of the Overbrook Press was right here in San Francisco. In a "Foreword" to The Overbrook Press Bibliography compiled by Herbert Cahoon of the Morgan Library, and published by the Press in 150 copies in 1963, Frank Altschul tells us:

"The story of The Overbrook Press really begins when I was a boy

in San Francisco. Because of an expressed interest in printing, my mother surprised me with a printing press for Christmas. Within a day or two she found smears of printer's ink all over the house and to my dismay returned the press to the Emporium and gave me a Standard Dictionary in two volumes as a most unwelcome substitute."

He continues: "The memory of this Christmas gift lingered on. Our family moved to New York in 1901 and I was married to Helen Lehman Goodhart in 1913. In an apartment we occupied sometime after our marriage, I set up a small press with which I amused myself until the room in which it was lodged had to yield to the demands of a growing family. The last I heard of it was when my son Charles took it along with him to Hotchkiss."

Altschul retained a general interest in the graphic arts. He joined the Grolier Club in 1914. I have come across a passing reference to commissions by him to Updike of the Merrymount Press. His name turns up in the list of Contributing Editors of the *Colophon* as early as 1931. He was becoming a collector of importance, particularly in the field of French illustrated books. There are a number of references in the great biography of *Rosenbach*, and of particular interest is the fact that he used the resources of Lazard Freres to back the Doctor in some of his important speculative purchases, with a *quid pro quo* of first choice of items for his own collection. But there was a long hiatus before Altschul returned to printing as a hobby in 1934.

A visit to Elmer Adler's shop at Pynson Printers revived his interest in operating a press; and when August Heckscher decided to bring the activities of his Ashlar Press, a part-time hobby, to an end, Margaret B. Evans, who had been the guiding spirit of this press, approached Altschul with the idea that he might wish to continue the venture on his own. His response was immediate and enthusiastic.

A long-abandoned pig pen at Overbrook Farm experienced a sudden transmigration into a modern private press, in comfortable quarters overlooking the Mianus River. Apochryphal though this pig pen story might seem, it is a fact that one of the early Overbrook imprints carries a printer's device of three pigs looking over a fence, and the name of Pig Pen Press is used. This was a reprint of a brief article by Quentin Reynolds, under the title of *One Hundred Percent American*,

published in 1939. The illustrations in it were done by none other than our fellow-Roxburgher, Valenti Angelo, who had previously done the title page for *Thoughts in the Half Light*, in 1936, and a vignette for the fourth publication of the press in 1934.

To get the project under way in 1934, a second-hand Colt's Armory press was acquired along with other necessary equipment, and Margaret B. Evans took over as designer and compositor. From the very outset until she left the press in 1944, Margaret B. Evans was undoubtedly of considerable influence on the career of the Overbrook Press. She played a dual role of designer and compositor; it was she who brought in an outstanding pressman, John McNamara, who remained with the press until his early death in 1955. Altschul writes that "It would be impossible to pay adequate tribute to the skill and uniform good taste which these dedicated craftsmen brought to their task," and that it "proved an inspiration to their successors, John Logan and Frederick Warns."

The first item to appear from the Press was a small pamphlet, a simple specimen book of the types, borders, rules and devices available, published in 1934. This was followed shortly by the first book of the press, George Meredith's *Modern Love*. It is an interesting coincidence that the first book of Thomas Bird Mosher printed was this same title, in 1891. Although both books are traditional in typography, at that point the similarity ends. The Overbrook edition was printed in 150 copies on Bilio paper, 5 x 7 inches, 50 pages, Original Old Face Caslon type, bound in full English buckram. A few copies were available to the public at \$3.00.

Margaret Evans wrote me recently, that "this first book was a great disappointment to both Frank Altschul and me. The title page was awful, the paper too thick, the binding too heavy. I always felt I owed another try at it. So at some point I began setting it again in Centaur during odd moments, and had John McNamara run through enough sheets to yield 8 good copies. These are the copies bound in orange morocco, and not copies from the first edition." Thus this edition becomes a greater rarity than any of the early pamphlets of the Ashendene Press. As a collector, I wonder where those 8 copies are, and whether one will ever come my way.

The second book of the press was a book of *Poems* by Madge Cook, French-fold; Lutetia type. 75 copies on Rives paper; boards; labels; slip case; for private distribution only.

The final book of 1934 was somewhat more ambitious, George Savile's *The Lady's New Year's Gift or: Advice to a Daughter*. Original Old Face Caslon type was used, with 300 copies printed on wet Arnold cream wove paper. 250 of these were bound in boards; 50 copies bound in full vellum by Peter & Cornelia F. M. Franck, one of the most distinguished American binders of the time. Our copy (so bound) was presented to Joseph Blumenthal / Master Printer. This is the book in which the Angelo vignette appeared.

In studying the bibliography year by year, one can suspect that Miss Evans exercised her influence not only on design and typography, but also on the selection of material to print. The early emphasis was on what might be called belles lettres. In 1935 appeared *A Dream In The Luxembourg* by Richard Aldington; *One More Spring* by Robert Nathan; and a particularly fitting piece of fine typography in the reprinting of *Addresses* by Chauncey B. Tinker and Carl F. Rollins, commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Birth of William Morris, in which one may find a border by Valenti Angelo. A simple check-list of The Overbrook Press for the first two years completed the work for 1935. It would seem that generally The Overbrook was trodding the traditional path of the private press.

But in 1936 and 1937, along with such belles lettres as *The Happy Prince* by Oscar Wilde and Laurence Stern's *A Sentimental Journey*, there appeared several items quite foreign to the emerging pattern: *The Presidential Electoral Vote from 1866 to 1932* and *Adverse Report of the Committee on the Judiciary*, the latter dealing with the proposed packing of the Supreme Court by President Roosevelt. Clearly political material, high-level though it may be.

During 1938 and 1939, along with a superb edition of *An Inland Voyage* and a monumental edition of Shakespeare's *Poems*, appeared titles such as *Wire Tapping. Its Relation to Civil Liberties, Radical Literature in America* by Frederick N. Adams, Jr., and a tribute to Benjamin Nathan Cardozo by Irving Lehman, evidence that the political interest was bent toward the liberal side. Although Altschul's re-

lationship to the Lehman family was through marriage, it was a close one, and the Lehman influence on Altschul shows up in many a later press title.

From this point on there is apparent a slow but steady increase in the selections for the press falling into non-literary categories, with particular emphasis on political and economic affairs, both national and international. He said at one time that he had always been interested in propaganda. His choice of the word was an odd one. He was becoming a sort of midwife pamphleteer, selecting from significant addresses those which he felt most compatible to his own thinking, dressing them up in attractive typographic garb and mailing them to a selected list of names, the list running usually from 100 upwards to 1000. In a few instances to 2,000, 3,000 and 4,000. Just how these lists were prepared I have no idea. But that would be an interesting study in itself.

Of course, he could have started with the membership rosters of the Grolier and Century Clubs. But as the subjects of his books and pamphlets increased in range beyond the more limited interests of Grolier and Century Club members as such, the quantity printed increased and the mailing list not infrequently broadened, to include members of Congress and the State Legislature. Mrs. Evans describes Mr. Altschul as a man "deeply convinced about the need for law and justice," and that "He had supported the printing of the record in the Sacco-Vanzetti case, which Felix Frankfurter sponsored. He was passionately against the Court packing plan of Roosevelt. In having the wire-tapping study made by Mr. Greenman, he was anticipating having the question come up for Dewey in 1938. (In this case) Copies of the Introduction were mailed to the members of the New York State Legislature, because we couldn't finish the book itself in time."

Through 1969, the last year of its activity, I have a record of 269 titles of the Overbrook Press. I have tried to analyze these, breaking them down into fairly broad categories. The greatest number are clearly on subjects devoted to national affairs, and there are 64 of these. Next in number are tributes, memorials and resolutions, mostly relating to personal friends or family members, ephemeral in nature, but nevertheless handsomely produced. They number 42. Titles devoted to international affairs, 38; education, 20; graphic arts, 14;

check lists, bibliography and plans of the Press, 8. Books on chess, 8. I had to toss 40 items into a miscellaneous category, as their titles were not sufficiently definitive.

This leaves 35 titles of a belles lettres character. If the Overbrook had produced none other than these, it would have earned for itself a permanent position in the galaxy of American and English private presses of the 20th century.

I would like to single out a few of these for special reference, and talk about one in considerable detail.

Because of my interest in Stevenson, I have a particular fondness for *An Inland Voyage*. Quoting from Altschul's *Foreword* to the Bibliography: "On the occasion of one of my frequent visits to Paris, I invited Jean Hugo (grandson of the great novelist, incidentally) to make the illustrations for the *Inland Voyage*. He readily fell in with the idea on one condition—that I make it possible for him to follow Stevenson's trip through the canals of the Low Countries in order to gather material for the work in prospect. To this I at once agreed, and sometime later I received from Hugo as a delightful souvenir of his journey a slender copy of the *Inland Voyage* in which as he went along he had inserted before each chapter small sketches in water color to guide him in the completion of his task."

Published in 1937, *An Inland Voyage* was set by hand, and printed on hand made paper in an edition of 150 copies. Hugo's sketches for his illustrations took the form of colored chapter headings for each of the twenty-three sections of the book. M. Saude of Paris executed these gouaches in pochoir (the French word for stencil). It is sheer pleasure to leaf through this book, a masterpiece of fine book-making that was selected as one of the Fifty Books of the Year.

A truly monumental work, an imposing folio edition of Shakespeare's *Poems* was printed in 24-pt. Lutetia on Cromwell gray hand-made paper; the initials were specially designed by Bruce Rogers. The book was hand-bound in a specially made marble paper with red niger back and with borders gold stamped. Professor George Lyman Kittredge, and his publishers, Ginn and Company, granted permission to the Overbrook Press to use the authoritative text of the poems from a recently published Kittredge edition of Shakespeare's Complete Works. As not less than 50 copies of this book were given to friends, it

must rank with the William Andrews Clark Christmas book as a startling largesse to the recipients.

Another of my favorites is *One More Spring* by Robert Nathan. It was designed and illustrated by W. A. Dwiggins, containing 17 chapter headings in color. Quite atypical of Overbrook practice, 750 copies of this quite remarkable example of fine bookmaking were printed.

It is noted in the prospectus that 550 copies were reserved for sale, so we may assume he gave away to his friends at least 200 copies.

Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*, designed and illustrated by Rudolph Ruzicka, was printed in an edition of 250 copies, 200 copies of 250 for sale. He also offered publicly seven sets of artist's signed proofs at \$30.00 per set, another strange departure from private press practice.

Thomajan, in his *Inland Printer* article calls special attention to two books in the graphic arts category. ". . . the two publications that commend the Overbrook Press to typographic immortality are *Progress in the Graphic Arts* by T. M. Cleland, and *The Pied Printer's Primrose Path*. "The Cleland book," he says, "is an unusual essay rendered with searing irony on the subject of modernistic dabblers in typography, while the latter is a delightful typographic caprice, a lightsome lark of dancing words, types, and ornaments."

The flagship of this fleet of fine press books must certainly be Prevost's *Manon Lescaut*. Roderick Cave, in his scholarly book, *The Private Press*, is unqualified in his praise. He writes, "As an example of the luxurious book at its most magnificent, at its further remove from commercial printing, the Overbrook *Manon Lescaut* is unequaled among modern private press books, and has few peers among the books of earlier presses."

Manon Lescaut, published in 1958, 200 copies, folio, calf, boxed, included a 4 page printed note on design and printing laid in, "A note on the manner of its design and printing." I wish it were possible to include the entire text of this note, but for those who wish to study in more detail the manner in which the illustrations in this book were done, the full text was on exhibit at Gleeson.

The note begins: "Since this book, so far as is known, is unique in the method of its production, it has been thought that it would be of

interest to include with it this note, describing the means by which it has been illustrated and printed.

"At the outset it should be understood that the pictures in this book are *not reproductions* in the generally understood meaning of that term. There were no colored originals from which they could be reproduced; and each of the two hundred copies of the thirty-odd pictures and decorations is an original in the sense that an autographic print by an artist in any medium is such. A pattern drawing in black and white was made by the artist, and used solely for the correct registration of the various colors; but the colors were made and applied by his own hand and judgment to the pages on which they appear. Photography plays no part anywhere in the procedure."

In a penultimate paragraph, the note summarizes: "As a concluding emphasis to the opening statement of this note, that this may be considered a unique book, it might be of interest to say that the artist who created the illustrations not only performed all of the above described operations with his own hand, unaided by any other, but constructed all the apparatus and made, as well, all other equipment used. To those familiar from the start with the progress of the work, it may be thought lamentable, but not surprising, that it has consumed somewhat more than six years of intensive and unremitting labor."

In the *Overbrook Bibliography*, Frank Altschul pays this tribute to genius behind this book: "Anyone who knows my old friend Tom Cleland will not be surprised to learn that *Manon Lescaut* was six years in the making. Tom is a perfectionist and worked over every item in this book until he was completely satisfied with the result. Blank sheets were sent to his home in Danbury. There, with the most painstaking care, he transferred the illustrations to paper through the medium of a delicate stencil process known as silk-screen. For every illustration, each color—and there were many—had to be printed separately, a seemingly interminable undertaking. The sheets were then returned to us, and the text was then printed in conformity with the layout previously prepared by him. I almost despaired of the book ever being finished."

Now that we have scaled the peak, let us explore some of the lower ranges.

The great mass of other material produced by the press, and largely

distributed free, is more difficult to appraise judiciously—the wide range of pamphlets and small books dealing with matters of national and international affairs. One is not accustomed to examining and savoring private press material devoted to such matters and designed quite obviously to influence public opinion. But because of the high level of unstructured selectivity, it was not a propaganda operation in the contemporary sense of the word. He was not trying to “sell” an ideology. He was trying to get people to think about the important issues of the day, and to provide them with the materials that would stimulate them to think. One of my correspondents takes a more narrow point of view, no doubt conditioned by devotion to fine printing as an art: “I think he liked good printing but, as he grew wealthier, he succumbed to the usual lust for status and influence—too bad! If he had only stopped when his interest in fine printing began to lessen.”

But Roderick Cave, again in *The Private Press*, takes a more objective point of view. “Many of its pamphlets and smaller books,” he writes, “have a seriousness of purpose not frequently encountered in private press work, and an excellence of typography and presentation not often to be seen in political or social publications. *Adverse Report of the Committee on the Judiciary* (on the Roosevelt Court Packing Bill) or Senator Fullbright’s *Towards a more creative foreign policy* are not the sort in which one would expect to find much typographic merit, yet the Overbrook Press’s care and success in the printing of works of this sort is far better than that of the majority of private presses working in far easier fields.” Mr. Cave’s summary judgment with respect to the other works of the Press is worth quoting: “On the many occasions that Overbrook has produced books in the more conventional areas for a private press, its work has been of a quality which places it in the very highest class of those concerned with the art of the book.”

In studying this vast array of pamphleteering activity, I find most impressive the fact that of these many articles, speeches and tracts dealing with national and international affairs and our political life, a high percentage may be read today with profit.

There seems to be no constricting ideological pattern to the selections Mr. Altschul has made for his Press. On the one hand, he reprints a talk before the UN General Assembly on November 23, 1949, by Dr. Charles Malik, Minister of Lebanon, under the title of “War and

Peace.” Altschul wrote a two-page introduction to this that might justify required reading today for those who do not approach the idea of Detente with Russia with eyes open. He says in essence that the thesis of Dr. Malik is that Communism in general and the Soviet Union in particular do not really wish peace; that every peace offensive is but a strategic or tactical device determined by the particular stage in the development of Communism. It is, in reality, just a phase of an over all war plan. Altschul goes on to say: “In support of this thesis, Dr. Malik has drawn extensively on the writings of the principal intellectual leaders of world Communism, from Marx to Stalin. His argument, pursued with relentless logic, is punctuated by the most telling quotations from Communist sources. In brief compass, he has contrived to expose the philosophy and purpose of the Soviet Union with amazing clarity.” In light of debate on detente today, may I emphasize the fact that this was written in 1950.

In 1968 the Overbrook Press printed a pamphlet under the title “Letter From Birmingham Jail” written by Martin Luther King, Jr. In a Foreword, Altschul writes: “It was only after the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., that I had occasion to read his ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail.’ This eloquent document is now reprinted at the Overbrook Press as a tribute to the memory of the leader of ‘nonviolent-disobedience’ in the Civil Rights struggle.”

The story of the Overbrook Press would not be complete without reference to the books on Chess. In his foreword to the Bibliography (1963), Mr. Altschul writes that “Having struggled for years with the Two-Move Chess Problem, I felt that books on this subject were, in general, abominably printed. This led to the Overbrook series on Chess Problems, well received by the somewhat limited number of those addicted to this particular diversion.”

Apparently chess addicts do not relinquish these books to the antiquarian book dealer as I had never seen a copy until Steve Corey turned up seven of them for the exhibition from the chess collection of Dr. Norman Reider. P. K. Thomajan, in his article on the Overbrook Press in *The Inland Printer*, June, 1953, states that eight chess books had been printed at that time. He goes on to say that “these require the most exacting composition. Diagrams showing various moves are made up entirely of Monotype squares. There is a just jibing of rules,

tight closing up of corners and eliminating of all the white openings. Inasmuch as these titles are limited editions, some thought is given to typography, and color is added to get away from the drabness of ordinary chess books." Frank Altschul was a member of the distinguished Marshall Chess Club in the 1920's and 30's, knew all the players and played against them.

Thomajan provides further technical details about the Press generally, in his article, such as the fact that the three press marks used up to that time were designed by T. M. Cleland. He lists the "treasury of fine papers . . . many of them dating back prior to the first World War:" Brooke, Batchelor, Arches, Winterbourne, from England; Van Gelder from Holland; Amalfi, Fabriano and Praga from Italy; Papier de Chine from China; and Handwove from Sweden.

In types, the press had a complete series of English Caslon, Lutetia, Arrighi, Centaur and miscellaneous fonts, along with a liberal supply of English and American foundry borders, ornaments and brass rules; also Monotype borders, and ornaments.

Margaret Evans wrote me that Altschul was "never interested in selling books, but he humored me by letting me try a few items, which we sold through Duschnes and the Chiswick, and through two or three direct-mail approaches."

The prices were most reasonable, considering the quality of the books, typographically, and in the quality of paper and bindings. *The Lady's New Year's Gift*, bound in full vellum was only \$10.00. *One More Spring* by Robert Nathan, \$10.00; Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*, \$11.50.

The two volumes of *Sentimental Journey*, bound in full English calf, in slip case, was a bargain at \$15.00. *An Inland Voyage* and Shakespeare's *Poems* might seem expensive at \$50.00 each, but careful examination would convince one that the cost of producing them was far greater than the price tag, and in each instance perhaps at least a third of the 150 copies printed were given to friends.

Whenever the Overbrook Press items were sent to Altschul's selected list of recipients, a small card was slipped under the upper cover, neatly typeset, with unintrusive messages, such as:

Reprinted for the diversion of friends of the Overbrook Press regardless of age or sex.

This timely and provocative article comes to you with the compliments of Frank Altschul.

For want of something new to send you, this old favorite . . .

Printed for our Senators and Congressmen who, in these troubled times, may find much needed distraction in the refreshing humor of Mark Twain.

In the mood of gaiety appropriate to the Season, we send you this diverting trifle with our Best Wishes for a Happy New Year.

Once in a while one stumbles upon something so delightful that it seems imperative to share the discovery with others.

In bringing this paper to a close, it might be appropriate to square the circle back to San Francisco by mentioning one more time from the Overbrook bibliography. This is a pamphlet created for *An Exhibition of the Work of Edwin and Robert Grabhorn* by the AIGA in New York, 1942. In the list of acknowledgments those lending books included Valenti Angelo, Ernest Dawson, Francis Farquhar, Helen Gentry, Oscar Lewis and David Magee. Harry Levinson compiled the catalogue. Designs for the cover and title page were created by Valenti Angelo. Typography was handled by Margaret Evans, and the cover printed by the Overbrook Press.

There are still perhaps not-forgotten ties to San Francisco in the memory of this man who dreams away the final years of his life on a beautiful estate in Connecticut. And what does he look back on as the most enduring contributions of a long and active life? Making money? Leadership in banking circles? Social position? Political influence in his own way? As this panorama moves across his screen of recollections, perhaps it might be *Inland Voyage*, *Manon Lescaut*, the *Poems* of Shakespeare, or *The Happy Prince* and the enormous spread of more than 260 beautifully printed pieces, that strike more deeply and significantly into his sense of satisfaction. It might be said that the printed word can be a monument more permanent than bronze. I am certain that The Overbrook Press will be known among collectors and practitioners of fine printing long after Mr. Altschul's more worldly successes have been forgotten.

NORMAN H. STROUSE

Elected to Membership

THE TWO classifications of membership above Regular Membership are Patron Memberships, \$125 a year, and Sustaining Memberships, \$50 a year:

New Patron Member:

<i>Member</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>
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CHARLES MARION MONELL, M.D.	Los Angeles	Georges J. Houle
MRS. WILLIAM LEE OLDS	San Francisco	Albert Shumate
OTHMAR PETERS	Mill Valley	Wesley Tanner

The following have changed from Regular to Sustaining Membership:

GEORGE T. AKIN	Lake Arrowhead
ROBERT N. GOLD	Los Angeles
MRS. JACK KING HORTON	Los Angeles
THEODORE B. KAHLE	Berkeley
ALBERT E. LONG, M.D.	San Francisco
JOSEPH MARTIN, JR.	San Francisco
BERNARD M. ROSENTHAL	San Francisco
JOHN M. SHAW, M.D.	Tacoma, Washington

The following have been elected to Membership since the publication of the Spring News-Letter:

<i>Member</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>
NEAL COONERTY	Santa Cruz	Sherwood Grover
KAY CRADDOCK	Melbourne, Australia	John G. Chanalís
JAMES B. CUMMINS, JR.	Brooklyn, New York	Henry M. Bowles
ROBERT A. DEWEY, JR.	San Francisco	Membership Committee
CHARLES A. FRACCHIA	San Francisco	Membership Committee
LT. COL. HERBERT ELY GARCIA, (Ret.)	Oakland	Oscar Lewis
GERALD G. GINI	Stockton	Membership Committee
LEONARD M. GOTTLIEB	Cedar Grove, New Jersey	Membership Committee
DAVID MIKE HAMILTON	Palo Alto	Diana Thomas
DAVID HULL	San Francisco	Gary Kurutz
EDWARD C. KEMP	Eugene, Oregon	Ottar M. Dahl
LEONARD F. KLOSINSKI	Santa Clara	Gerald L. Alexanderson
GLENN W. MASON	Eugene, Oregon	Membership Committee
MRS. E. F. MENZIES	Santa Barbara	Mrs. E. Morris Cox
JEANNIE SACK	San Francisco	Gale Herrick
CHARLES W. TAGGART	Salt Lake City, Utah	Alfred Kennedy
HARRY VALENTINE	Ventura	Georges J. Houle
GEOFFREY WOO-MING, M.D.	Mill Valley	Lester Roberts
RICHARD B. YALE	San Diego	Henry H. Clifford
UNIV. OF DELAWARE LIBRARY	Newark, Delaware	Membership Committee
UNIV. OF GEORGIA LIBRARIES	Athens, Georgia	Herbert C. Caplan

Report of the Annual Meeting, 1976

THE ANNUAL MEETING of The Book Club of California was held Tuesday, March 16, 1976, at 11:30 a.m. in the Club Rooms. President Leah Wollenberg presided. Reports covering the year's activities were given, and the President expressed her appreciation to officers, directors, committee chairman and members for their support.

Of the five directors whose terms were expiring, Mr. Earl C. Adams, Mr. Sanford L. Berger, Mr. Wm. P. Barlow, Jr. and Mr. Joseph M. Bransten were not eligible for re-election. Mr. Lewis Allen was eligible but declined to serve a second term. Mr. Muir Dawson, Mr. Michael Harrison, Dr. James D. Hart, Mr. David Magee and Mr. David Myrick were elected to serve for the term expiring March, 1979.

Following the Annual Meeting, the Board of Directors met for election of officers. Mrs. Harold Wollenberg was re-elected President, Mr. Michael Harrison was elected Vice-President, Mr. Wm. P. Barlow, Jr. was re-elected Treasurer, Mrs. Gaye Kelly was re-elected Executive Secretary and Miss Madeleine S. Rose was re-elected Assistant Secretary.

The following committees have been appointed to serve for the year:

EXHIBITS: Albert Sperisen (Chairperson), D. Steven Corey, Gary Kurutz, Duncan Olmsted

LIBRARY: Albert Sperisen (Chairperson), Barbara Land

FINANCE: Wm. P. Barlow, Jr. (Chairperson), John Borden, Henry Bowles, Gale Herrick, Mrs. David Potter, Florian Shasky

HOUSE: Mrs. David Potter, (Chairperson), Mark Hanrahan, Dorothy Whitnah

KEEPSAKES: Dr. R. S. Speck, (Chairperson), Alfred Kennedy, Dr. Albert Shumate, Albert Sperisen

MEMBERSHIP: Henry Bowles (Chairperson), Franklin Gilliam, Michael Harrison, Warren R. Howell, Gary Kurutz, Albert Shumate, Norman Strouse

PUBLICATIONS: Florian Shasky (Chairperson), John Borden, Muir Dawson, Richard Dillon, Franklin Gilliam, James D. Hart, Oscar Lewis, David Magee, David Myrick, Mrs. R. F. Ferguson, Albert Sperisen

QUARTERLY NEWS-LETTER: John Borden (Editor-In-Chief,) Richard Dillon, Oscar Lewis, David Magee, Albert Sperisen, John Windle

Serendipity

As you have already noticed, your *Quarterly News-Letter* arrived with a wrap-around mailing cover instead of in an envelope. In the continuing effort to keep costs under control, the Board authorized this change since it is significantly less expensive than envelopes. Also, we mailed this issue under a bulk, non-profit organization permit which is less expensive as well. At the same time, we do not want to lessen any service to members. Consequently, if your *Quarterly* arrives in damaged condition, please return it and a replacement will be mailed. The wrap-around cover can be easily removed.

Effective June 1, 1976, extra copies of Keepsakes or News-Letters will be sold to members at \$2.00 each.

The Club's publication *The Philobiblon* issued in 1925 at a cost of \$10.00 was offered for sale in the J & S Catalogue No. 27 for \$135.00. *The Letters of Frank Norris* published in 1956 at a cost of \$9.75 had a selling price of \$85.00. And, our 1947 Keepsake series *California Poetry Folios* were offered for sale at \$100.00!

Several members have suggested these pages be used to provide a means for members to initiate communications with other members with similar collecting interests or who may have answers to unanswered questions. The Book Club will forward the initial communications to the originating member for continuing correspondence. This round about way is done to avoid publishing addresses of members which The Book Club will not do. (Mailings which members have received are addressed by the staff not by the sender.) So, if you want to contact other members with similar collecting interests or if you have a question and the answer has eluded you, send a letter to the *Quarterly News-Letter* and we will publish it.

MEMBERS WHO are interested in having a copy of the latest Exhibition Handlist: Bookbindings in the Chapin Library, Williams College, may send a request to the Librarian, H. Richard Archer, P. O. Box 426, Williamstown, Mass. 01267 and it will be sent gratis.

Member Dr. W. F. Fry, and Dr. Melanie Allen have published a book entitled MAKE 'EM LAUGH—*Lifestudies of Comedy Writers*. A collection of interviews with professional comedy writers against a background of theory and commentary of humor and its role in society. Science and Behavior Press, P. O. Box 11457, Palo Alto, Ca 94306, \$8.95 plus tax where applicable.

Reviews

Leah Wollenberg (Mrs. Harold A. Wollenberg, president of The Book Club of California) who is one of the Bay Area's outstanding hand bookbinders, has just finished for The Book Club a binding that is a fine example of her artistry and craftsmanship. The book is *The Vintage Festival* by Sara Bard Field, with decorations by Ray F. Coyle, printed for The Book Club of California by John Henry Nash, San Francisco, 1920. It is inscribed by the author to John Julius Johnck, one of The Book Club's early printers, who printed her first book of poems. Johnck had always wanted to have a fine binding made for this charming book (it was already sewn), but he died before it happened. The unbound book became the property of his partner, Harold Seeger, and when he died, it was given to Albert Sperisen, who in turn presented it to The Book Club and then persuaded Mrs. Wollenberg to bind it. The binding is of dark green morocco representing the grape leaves, and on both covers there is onlaid a narrow band of purple morocco representing the grapes. The purple band extends over the top and bottom edges and onto the inside covers, and is bordered with a design in gold put in with a fillet and a single gold line. On the front cover the title and author's name are gold tooled on the purple band, and there is a leaf tooled in gold in the lower right corner. On the inside covers there is a doublure, or panel, of autumn-toned marbled paper, framed with a narrow edge of the purple morocco. The fly-leaves are the same autumn-toned marbled paper. The head bands are of purple silk, and the top edge is gilt.

DUNCAN H. OLMSTED

DAWSON'S OF Los Angeles have just published Club member Roby Wentz's *Western Printing: a selective and descriptive bibliography of books and other materials on the history of printing in the Western states, 1822-1975*. This is a 90-page book with 12 excellent illustrations and it has been issued in an edition of 300 copies for \$12.50 (plus tax where it applies). Richard J. Hoffman printed this work for Dawson's and it is well designed and cased. Roby Wentz, incidentally locates examples of type specimen books which expand (!) the Annenberg list (see review of that book in this issue). Unfortunately, as in all selective lists, it can be faulted. So with tongue in cheek, we would like to have seen, for example, a subject index as part of this valuable work. Although all entries are alphabetically arranged and chaptered: Oral Histories, Periodicals, Type Specimens, it is too difficult to locate any contemporary or historical facts of importance in this arrangement. And too, there are a few minor slip-ups. In discussing George Prescott Vance's contribution to Western printing, Wentz makes no reference to his years with Taylor & Taylor (1913-1935). In his listing of Adrian Wilson's *Printing for the Theatre*, the tip-ins are recorded but not the envelope in the back of the book with loose examples of theatre printing. And of the Book Club's *A Portfolio of Book Club Printers*, only 8 of the 12 printers are mentioned, although he notes 12 in the heading. These slips, and this reviewers suggested improvement should in no way detract from this important and excellent contribution to Western printing history. This is truly a "must" book for any printing library and priced very reasonably.

ALBERT SPERISEN

Type Foundries of America and their Catalogs. Compiled and written by Maurice Annenberg. Maran Printing Services, Baltimore and Washington, 1975. 4to, 245 pp., \$30.00. This is an important compilation, by far the most ambitious project of its kind to date. It has been greeted with enthusiastic general acclaim. The entire Kemble Occasional of October 1975 is devoted to the book, calling it "a graphic arts book that is destined to become a standard reference." This book goes much beyond Ralph Green's 1951 checklist of American typesetters catalogues and Bowker's *Guide of American Trade Catalogs*. Seventy-five foundries are listed. The pioneer foundries (1768-1792) are discussed in the first part of the text and there are reproductions of some early type-specimen sheets. The second, larger part of the text is called "The Active Type Foundries" and covers the period from 1796 to 1941. This is a compilation of the type foundries that preceded or were among the twenty-three foundries that made up the American Type Founders Company in 1892. Included are a list of each firm's catalogs as well as historical notes. While the overall compilation is admirable and monumental, Mr. Annenberg draws some criticism because of his somewhat casual approach to history. His narrative histories are woven pieces of hearsay and fact. He frankly states "if the stories are not complete you can make your own ending." There are also no footnotes or references "to disturb your reading" although there is a short bibliography. The greatest regret, however, is that there is no index of any kind. Simply because there was so much data that would have benefited from an index, the compilation of one would have seriously delayed the books' publication. All of these points can, arguably, be handled in later editions. Moreover, Mr. Annenberg's style is lively and engaging and he is modestly aware of the books' shortcomings. This compilation is an impetus to further research, not the last word. But Mr. Annenberg and his co-workers have presented the cornerstone of all that will follow.

D. STEVEN COREY

Early Printed Book Labels by Brian North Lee. This fascinating book was published in Great Britain, 1976, by the Private Libraries Association and the Bookplate Society, Ralvelston, South View Road, Pinner, Middlesex. There are 205 pages, profusely illustrated, cataloguing dated personal labels and gift labels printed in Britain to the year 1760.

In the informative *Introduction*, the compiler draws a fine line between the terms "bookplate," "book label," "woodcut label," "engraved label," and "printed label." The latter is simply a name ticket composed of type, but frequently embellished by the addition of arbitrary decoration. Of course all are marks of ownership, and therefore especially important to collectors for showing provenance.

The study of early dated book labels arises out of an awareness that they have been curiously neglected by those chronicling the history of *ex libris*. With the production of printed books, the employment of a printed label or bookplate was an obvious and natural development if ownership was to be imbued with dignity. The most common inscriptions on early printed labels were name and date, sometimes with the addition of 'His/Her Book.'

In the cataloguing of British printed labels, the first is a gift label dated 1480, but simple ownership marks are primarily in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Early American labels are discussed in Appendix A: twenty-six seventeenth century examples are cited, all of which are of extreme rarity. Some were actually printed in England, and some possibly by Stephen Daye—the first printer in New England.

Thinking of England-America, we are reminded of a verse written in a Wynkyn de Worde volume by its English owner (in lieu of a book label) when it was sold to an American collector:

"For thirty years this book was mine; 'why then do we not see
An Ex-Libris, to show us how you prized your library?'
God save you, sirs, I never saw device I cared to wear,
No arms of mine the Heralds know, no motto old I bear,
So now I write a bookplate, this message forth to send,
My book has gone a thousand leagues and found for me a friend."

LEWIS M. ALLEN

Library Gifts and Acquisitions

Ever since the showing of member John Lehner's exciting collection of trade bindings (October-December 1975), the Library decided to acquire at least one prime example for our collection of *Publishing Firsts*. By rare good fortune, we were offered through a local dealer a most unusual trade binding in boards. This interesting work is titled *An Army Doctor's Romance* by Grant Allen, n.d. (c. 1892) London, Paris, New York, and it is number 3 of the "Breezy Library Series." (We are reluctant to say "not in Sadleir," but he records number 1 and 2 only!) The cover of this attractive book is embossed over a full color lithograph from a drawing signed Raphael Tucks—who incidentally is the publisher. The title calls for illustrations by a Harry Payne and these are all black and white, but the frontispiece is a full color chromolithograph signed by a Fred Hines. The casing by the way, is the original (?) of the trick used by Helen Gentry with boards mounted on a cloth backstrip. Perhaps one of our collectors in this field can better qualify this unusual book?

Member Franklin Gilliam has very generously presented the Club with a copy of his published *Addendum and Corrigenda to the Inscriptional Work of Eric Gill*. This added material on the inscriptional work of possibly the greatest inscriptional engraver since the Renaissance, was compiled by David Peace of England and printed for Mr. Gilliam by the Grabhorn-Hoyem Press in 1972 in an edition of 275 copies.

From our two regular English correspondents and contributors, we have received more exciting packets of their work. From Rigby Graham, artist and operator of his own Cog Press, in Leicester, we were sent examples of his "Barwell Broadsides" (similar to the "Phoenix Broadsides" of Toni Savage, also of Leicester) and a complete check-list of Mr. Graham's work from 1958. (We were pleased to note that the Club owns his first work—*Adventures in Paper Making*, illustrated by Graham.) With the many examples of his art and printing, Graham has included a copy of *Littak No 10*, a small magazine devoted to poetry and prose which contains a "Note" on Rigby Graham and his work, together with a "Comment" by Graham himself.

Toni Savage has sent us more of his interesting printing for the theatre—his "Phoenix Broadsides" and some poetry leaflets the most interesting of these is *Blackboard of Misfortune* by poet John Foreman and this is a typical example of Savage's New Broom Press. This 24-page booklet with expert drawings by Kathie Layfield, apparently a student of Rigby Graham, was printed in an edition of 125 and signed by the poet and printer.

Through a local purchase, the Club has again acquired another important work of Jan Tschichold the world famous typographical innovator who died in 1974 at his home in Switzerland. This book is in German and it was published in Basel by the Holbein Verlag in 1964. This is a recounting and his evaluation of written communication from the cave art period to the Doves Bible. The illustrations are notable in that they are not only well chosen but uncommon. This is now the third book by this typographical authority which the Library owns.

A few months ago, we bought *Im Dienste de Buches* printed in Copenhagen in 1951. In our review we said that Tschichold was a distinguished typographical designer and that he was the creator of Sabon typeface, the first in the history of printing that is indistinguishably uniform in Monotype, Linotype and in its foundry version (!) But the one project which brought this great designer to international fame was his Penguin series of paperbacks in the early forties. The high standards which he demanded (and got) and the strict typographic rules which he devised for mass-production of paperbacks have had a lasting influence on both English and American book production. This book illustrates his then current work and up to the re-design of the Penguin publications. This is a recommended book for any young printer—and old ones too.

OUR THANKS to bookdealer Tony Appleton of Brighton, England for his gift to the library of a charmingly produced booklet printed for him by Sebastian Carter of the Rampant Lions Press, Cambridge. This booklet was a talk given by Brooke Crutchley, retired Printer of the University Press at Cambridge on *The Cambridge Christmas Books*—the annual keepsakes privately printed for the “friends of printing and publishing” under the direction of Mr. Crutchley and Walter Lewis. For forty-three years these books have been produced and are much sought after today as examples of a *tour de force* in fine printing and book making. Our copy is number 38 of an edition of 200 copies signed by Brooke Crutchley.

From the International Scholarly Book Services Inc., we have received a copy for review of *Frank Sigwick's Diary*, an almost daily accounting of the beginnings of the Shakespeare Head Press at Stratford-upon-Avon from May 25, 1904 to March 23, 1905. This book has been published by Basil Blackwell for the (new) Shakespeare Head Press, 1975 and it has been designed by Ruari McLean in an edition of 1,000 copies. Frank Sigwick was a friend and early partner of Arthur Henry Bullen, the Press' founder whose dream created this press to print and publish an edition of Shakespeare in the home-town of the great Bard . . . the *Stratford Town Edition of Shakespeare*. Paul Moran has added a biography of Mr. Bullen (1857-1920) and in a pamphlet inserted in an envelope mounted in the back covers is a brief history of the foundation of this noted press illustrated with seven reproductions from photographs of interior and exteriors as it was then. This accounting of the founding of this important modern press is a happy companion to the Club's copy of the book on B. H. Newdigate (1869-1944) the last Scholar-Printer of this famous press and it too was published by Basil Blackwell in 1950. We are delighted to call attention to this important new work on the beginnings of the S.H.P. and copies can be had (only) from I.S.B.S. Inc., 10300 SW Allen Blvd., Beaverton, Oregon 97005, for \$25.00.

And from former Director Joseph Bransten, a copy of *Graphic Forms*, the arts as related to the book. This is a printed series of articles by 16 noted authorities on the books “function,” “form,” “style,” and “prospect,” and ends with an epilogue by Philip Hofer. We are grateful to Mr. Bransten for this book which fits well into our collection on contemporary American printing and design.

From member Alan Wofsy, we have received his new facsimile edition of the two-volume Grabhorn bibliography, in *one volume*. The publishers intent in issuing this facsimile was for libraries and for collectors who cannot afford the original edition—even if these two noble volumes could be had. The first volume of the original edition was only 210 copies and the second 225—which obviously means that 15 institutions or individuals who bought the second volume cannot have the first. This present facsimile is lithographed in two-colors throughout and it is bound in a stout buckram stamped in gold. There are 500 copies selling for \$75. plus tax. The book may be had from your own bookdealer or through the publisher, Alan Wofsy, Fine Arts, 150 Green Street, San Francisco 94111.

And from the same publisher, the Club has purchased his latest bibliographical production—*Notes on the Merrymount Press and its Works, 1893-1933* by Daniel Berkeley Updike—thus far a reprint. To this standard work, Daniel Berkeley Bianchi has compiled a *Supplementary Bibliography of the Press, 1934-1949*, adding greatly to our knowledge of this important American printer and of his later work at the Press. The book is 358 pages with many illustrations and it is limited to 500 copies for sale at \$30. plus tax, at your dealer or direct. This is another “must” book for any printing library.

We have purchased Alan G. Thomas’ *Great Books*, the English edition which Mr. Thomas inscribed for us. (The book has just been published in America by Putman.) This latest work of Mr. Thomas is an extension of his first smaller book, *Fine Books* which was issued some years ago. This new work is a large book with 24 pages of color and 200 black and white illustrations, principally with the emphasis of Europe, although he briefly mentions Bruce Rogers and Updike and quotes Oscar Lewis’ article on the Grabhorns from the *Colophon* (illustrating it with one of the Press’ early announcements). However, with these obvious short-comings Mr. Thomas has produced a handsome book on Western Civilization beginning with the *Book of Kells* and finishing with the great private presses. In addition, he has written two interesting chapters on the great collectors and their libraries and one on *Fakes and Forgeries*—plus an excellent bibliography. Any members who have been, or are on Thomas’ catalogue list will know how enthusiastic and infectious he can be, and this is particularly true of this exciting and opulent book.

Through the good offices of Director Stephen Gale Herrick, The library now owns a copy of *The Autobiography of William Henry Donner*, as privately printed for the Donner family in 1973. This is a large quarto bound in buckram and housed in a slip-case; it is over 140 pages and printed on Tovil hand-made paper, handset in Perpetua by Clifford Burke in an edition of 100 copies. This book is probably the finest Clifford has done to date and the Club is delighted to include it among their collection of fine Western printing.

From our most conscientious library worker, Barbara Land, the Club has now added through her goodness, a copy of the Morgan Press’ *Wood-Type*, a display book of exotic 19th century American publicity typefaces—an interesting addition to our growing collection of type specimens.

The library has purchased *A Guide to Nineteenth Century Colour Printing* by Geoffrey Wakeman and Gavin Bridson, for our reference collection. It is a pity that the authors could not have had a better presentation for their important work—this book is an unhappy commercial production, a most un-typical example of British book making.

And from the Kennedy's, Lawton and Alfred, a copy of one of their latest printing commissions—*The History of Orinda, Gateway to Contra Costa County* by Mrs. Muir Sorrick with a prologue by the late Charles L. Camp. This book was printed for the Orinda Library Board and the Friends of Orinda Library. As expected, this is a typically fine example of the Kennedy's work—it is well designed and illustrated, and it too will be placed with our collection of Western fine printing.

Exhibit Notes

MEMEBERS AND IN particular readers of the Quarterly have on many occasions read of the exploits of Toni Savage and of his associate and fellow Leicester resident, Rigby Graham. Visitors to the Club have often asked to see the examples of their work which we had enthusiastically recorded with almost each issue. As this Quarterly goes to press, The Club at long last has arranged a comprehensive exhibition of Mr. Savage's New Broom Press and alter egos, and the work of Rigby Graham his fellow "fun" printer (who is also a serious fine artist). This is the first of the Club's long distance exhibitions of contemporary printing and it will be on view for three months (!) June, July and August.

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